

ACCESS

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The First Five Years

of ethnic Australians or the needs of bureaucracy. It is a moot point but, on indications so far, bureaucracy is winning hands down.

Fourthly, the amendment to the Act has expressly provided that political matter and controversial matter will not be broadcast or televised by the Service. The amendment to the Act provides that the provisions of Section 116 subsection (1) of the principal Act are excluded. Sub-section (1) of Section 116 provides that:

"Subject only to this section the [Australian Broadcasting] Commission may determine to what extent and in what manner political matter or controversial matter will be broadcast or televised by the Commission."

Insofar as internal dissension is concerned, there are problems within the Service with producers, co-ordinators and broadcasters. Some of the dissensions surfaced with the resignation of one of the producers and the resignation of one of the co-ordinators. However, the clamp came down and the public was kept in the dark as to what is happening within the Service.

As though the damage done by the Service to radio broadcasting was not serious enough, the Service was charged with televising a number of programmes during a given experimental period. The end result of the experimental programmes was allegedly described by the Ethnic Television Review Panel as some form of 'minestrone'. If the whole experiment was not so tragic, it would be laughable. The Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria became so incensed at the whole experimental project that it approached the Committee for Public Action for Community Television and, with the help of PACT, produced a 30-minute programme on the ethnic aged to demonstrate to the Service that the goodwill of ethnic Australians was there to be tapped.

The Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria re-states its stance on ethnic broadcasting. The policy of the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria on ethnic broadcasting (radio and television) is:

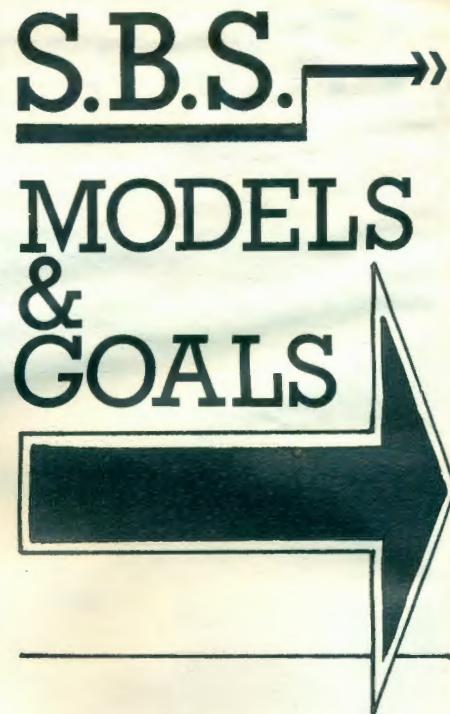
- 1) That there should be full and meaningful participation by ethnic communities through their elected representative in the development of policies and programmes in an ethnic broadcasting network.
- 2) That there must be adequate funding by Government for the development of some ethnic broadcasting at a standard of professionalism expected by the Australian Broadcasting Control Board.
- 3) That the ethnic broadcasting network must provide adequately and equitably for all ethnic communities, including those which are numerically small.

The Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria bases its policy on the concept that our society must:

- a) recognise its cultural diversity;
- b) allow access (to all domains, programmes, services) by all its members, regardless of whether they maintain such cultures or not; and
- c) promote the maintenance of 'minority' cultures (including languages) through its political and cultural structures, to the mutual good of the entire society.

It is imperative that ethnic broadcasting be developed. Development cannot take place unless there is a thorough overhaul of the whole Service. It is preferable that the Service be restructured by starting at the base, whereby a system of accountability is evolved to ethnic communities. The Service can only succeed in its function if the persons who are charged with developing the Service have a commitment to their individual communities. The repository of ethnic cultures lies within the ethnic communities themselves, and by inviting the participation of ethnic communities one can tap a tremendous wealth which will benefit the total community. Further, there are a number of social and economic problems and other political matter, as well as contentious matter, that must be given expression. It is only by allowing expression on contentious matter that we can learn to understand and adjust ourselves in an integrative process involving the whole community. Ethnic broadcasting must not be made the toy of politicians or be allowed to be manipulated by them. Ethnic broadcasting is a tremendous medium which can be harnessed to help develop a cohesive Australian society.

A. Bonnici 
Chairman, Media Committee
Ethnic Communities Council
of Victoria



The argument of this article is that a meaningful assessment of the SBS needs to develop integrated ideological, strategic and tactical perspectives.

The significance of ideology is that it enables the establishment of goals, and it is then possible to examine the extent to which the SBS helps or hinders these goals.

If, for instance, the goal is the establishment of an ethnic television service controlled by the ethnic community, then the goal is not being met by the presently constituted SBS. But, then, there may be disagreements about what constitutes control by the ethnic community.

The initial questions are: What constitutes ethnic control of the ethnic television service? What changes are necessary to the ethnic television services to enable the ethnic community to control the service? These questions take us into another question: What strategies and tactics are necessary to achieve these changes?

The questions are important because it is desirable for the ethnic community to precisely define the why, how, what, where and when of ethnic television.

It has been the argument of PACT, for instance, that the 3CR and 3ZZ organisational models are undesirable and inappropriate for CTV. PACT has developed its own organisational model.

THREE COMMUNITY MODELS

3CR

Primarily organisational membership, e.g. Brotherhood of St Laurence, Community Aid Abroad and the Public Transport Group. Membership also open to individual listeners.

Primarily programmes by organisations.

3ZZ

Primarily language group membership, e.g. Greek, Italian and German communities.

Primarily programmes by language groups.

PACT

Individual membership, but no organisational membership.

Programmes around issues and needs, e.g. children's television and environmental issues.

programmes) are equally desirable. It is not, therefore, a choice between ends and means or between programmes and participation, but rather creating a compatible balance between the two equally desirable needs. It is believed that neither the 3ZZ nor the 3CR models provide this compatible balance.

But, then, the PACT model could be criticised for its individualistic as opposed to collective basis. It could be argued that PACT is either attempting or pretending to avoid inevitable power struggles, which will be covert instead of overt. It could also be argued that the compatible balance sought by PACT is simply a misconceived cover-up for aesthetic and elitist assumptions about programming.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

First, an appropriate alternative model for ethnic broadcasting should be developed. This model should cover ownership and control, funding and the role of the Government.

Second, these goals need to be compared with the theoretical and actual structure and operation of the SBS.

Third, based on this analysis, alternative strategies and tactics need to be adapted for opposing and co-operating with the SBS, including the promise and reality of the policies of the various political parties.

The appropriate questions include:

- Should there be a separate ethnic television service?

- Should/could ethnic television be part of community television?
- What are the responsibilities of ABC and commercial television to ethnic groups?
- How should ethnic television be funded?
- Who should own and control ethnic television?
- What should be the role of the Government?

The accompanying examples indicate the range of possible models for ethnic television. Model A (State) is the equivalent of the SBS today — a Government-controlled station. Model B (State co-opted) is essentially the same as Model A except that the community has a real, but limited, say in an otherwise Government-controlled station. Model C is the kind of model foreshadowed by Frank Galbally — a consensus partnership dominated by Government and private enterprise, but including the ethnic community. Model D (Community) approximates the kind of alternatives being proposed by the ethnic community and as exemplified by 3ZZ, 3CR and the PACT proposal.

Ultimately, however, the ethnic community needs to decide for itself what kind of ethnic television is appropriate to its needs. The creation of the SBS, the work of the Ethnic Review Panel and the experimental ethnic television service have significantly proscribed and pre-determined this decision-making.

David Griffiths

EXAMPLES OF MODELS FOR ETHNIC TELEVISION

	Model A (State)	Model B (State Co-opted)	Model C (Partnership)	Model D (Community)
Transmitter ownership	Government (SBS)	Government (SBS/ABC)	Government (SBS/ABC)	Government/Community (SBS/ABC)
Equipment ownership	Government (SBS)	Government (SBS/ABC)	Government (SBS/ABC and ethnic private enterprise)	Ethnic Community Council/ethnic groups
Management	Government (SBS) with advisory committees	Equal Government and representatives nominated by ethnic community	Representatives nominated by ethnic private enterprise and ethnic community	Ethnic Communities Council/ethnic groups
Funding	Government	Government	Government and commercial	Government and/or community
Programming	Staff and volunteers	Staff and volunteers	Staff and volunteers	Staff and volunteers